Government with foreign countries for the execution/ maintenance of railway projects in the country during the last two years and the current year so far; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Mineral Wealth

359. SHRI KACHARU BHAU RAUT :
SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA :

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether mineral wealth of the country is decreasing constantly;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken to encourage exploration of mineral wealth in the country;

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) Minerals are non-renewable resources of the country. Depletion is proportionate to the quantum exploited only.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Geological Survey of India is one of the major organisation entirely dedicated to the exploration activities in the country. Annually about 170 mineral investigation projects are being taken up throughout the country. During 8th Five Year Plan Geological Survey of India has succeeded in augmenting the resources of various important mineral commodities. The Geological Survey of India has given main thrust during the 9th Five Year Plan for mineral exploration with special emphasis on deficient commodities of high value like Gold, Diamond, etc. as well as on ores & minerals of high demand like base metals, Tin, Tungsten, Molybdenum, etc.

Exploration is also carried out by Directorate of Mining & Geology in the respective States. Further, Guidelines for prospecting of minerals in larger areas through private sectors have also been issued recently.

[English]

Re-construction of Hotels by ITDC

360. SHRI S.D.N.R. WADIYAR :
SHRI MOHAN RAWALE :

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether the India Tourism Development Corporation propose to re-construct certain hotels in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether some foreign firms have been invited to join the joint ventures for designing and construction of these hotels;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the terms proposed for the said joint ventures?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SHRIKANTA JENA): (a) and (b) yes, Sir. ITDC envisages to undertake schemes for renovation of its Lodhi, Janpath and Ranjit Hotels in phased manner during the 9th Five Year Plan period (1997—2002).

(c) to (e). Presently, no joint venture is proposed for these schemes with any foreign firm.

Unauthorised Hutments and Construction around the Railway Track

361 SHRI RAM NAIK : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the efficiency of the Central Railway is adversely affected by the unauthorised hutments and other construction around the railway track;

(b) if so, the steps taken/proposed to be taken to remove these obstacles;

(c) whether the State Government of Maharashtra has proposed to the Union Government to allot their vacant land in Mumbai to hutments dwellers so that the present hutments can be removed; and

(d) if so, the reaction of the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Action against the unauthorised occupants of Railway land is taken under Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act, 1971.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Mega Projects for Promotion of Resort Tourism

362. SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government have taken a decision to set up a number of Mega projects with special focus on Resort Tourism;

(b) if so, the details thereof in terms of concept location financial implications, implementation schedule impact etc. project-wise;

(c) the follow up action taken/proposed to be taken both at the Apex level and State Government's level;

(d) the details of other innovative projects proposed to attract foreign tourist and encourage domestic tourism;

(e) whether the Union Government are considering structural changes at the Apex level by setting up Tourism Development Authority;

(f) if so, the details thereof;

(g) whether the Union Government also propose to set up mega projects at Hampi, Bellur and Halebeeb, etc. of Karnataka with special focus on Resort Tourism; and

(h) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) to (d). Identification, development and implementation of Mega Projects is entirely the responsibility of the State Governments. So far, the following Mega special projects namely Bekal Tourism Project in Kerala, Valiakulam Project in Kerala, Puri-Konark in Orissa, Sindhudurg in Maharashtra, Muttukadu Beach in Tamilnadu, Diu in Daman & Diu and International Hotel Complex in New Delhi have been identified.

(e) and (f). No Sir, However, for implementation of the mega projects, the State Government of Kerala and Orissa have set up Special tourism area Authority.

(g) and (h). The Government of Karnataka has submitted a project proposal for the overall development of the Hampi site for external financial assistance.

Imposition of ESMA on Hospital Strike

363. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether the staff of Hospitals have been brought under the Essential Services Maintenance Act;

(b) the effect of imposition of ESMA on the strike of karmacharis of Safdarjung Hospital; and

(c) the number of Karmacharis arrested after imposition of ESMA?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) and (b). The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi issued a Notification on 29.10.96 inter-alia prohibiting strike/agitation of all employees/doctors of Central Government Hospitals in Delhi under the Haryana Essential Services Maintenance Act, 1974 as extended to the National Capital Territory of Delhi. The Central Industrial Relations Machinery also initiated conciliation proceedings and finally an amicable agreement was arrived at on 15.11.96 which resulted in calling off of the Strike.

(c) The information is being collected and will be placed on the Table of the House.

[Translation]

Transfer of Telephone Connections

364. SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether his Ministry has issued directions under which arrangements have been made to transfer the local telephone connections within 7 days, from Exchange within 15 days and from State within one month and to set right the out of order telephones within 48 hours;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of complaints received in this regard separately by various communications/MTNL officers from June, 1996 till date which have been disposed off State-wise;

(d) the details of complaints which have not been disposed off as per above directions, State-wise particularly in Delhi;

(e) the reasons therefor and steps taken against the officers held responsible for this; and

(f) the steps taken by the Government for effective implementation of the directions in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. Instructions have been issued. The following norms have been prescribed :

1. Local Shift within 7 days
2. Interexchange shift within 10 days (15)
3. Intercity shift within 30 days
4. New Telephone Connection within 15 days
5. Fault Clearance within 48 hours.

(c) to (f). Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[English]

Introduction of DMU Trains

365. SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a demand to introduce DMU trains on Muzaffarpur, Hajipur and Chhapra section of the North Eastern Railway;

(b) if so, whether any decision has been taken in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) If not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Some representations have been received in this regard.